



CSBA Directors-at-Large

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In this issue: COVID-19 Impact on Students, Schools, and Communities

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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LATINO STUDENTS

by Joaquín J. Rivera—Director-at-Large, Hispanic

Latino Americans are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to contract COVID-19 and to face disproportionately high mortality rates when they contract the virus. Latinos, who make up 18.3% of the country’s population, represent 32.7% of new coronavirus cases. In addition, Latinos 18-49 are more likely to have the virus, be hospitalized and die from the disease than their peers. Some experts say the number of cases in Latinos may be high because they are more likely to live with family members of different generations. Also Latinos are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to work in industries where you can’t Zoom in from your kitchen table such as construction, farms, house-keeping, grocery stores and other essential services that put them at a higher risk of getting the virus.

Beyond the health impacts of the virus there are significant financial impacts as well:

- **Job losses.** 29 percent of Latino families have had someone in their household lose their job since businesses across the country began shutting down due to COVID-19. Job losses among Latinos are highest among 18-29-year-olds and those with income levels of \$25,000 or lower, with each rising to 37 percent.
- **Business losses.** 33 percent of Latino parents/primary caregivers have either seen their business shut down and/or have experienced significant drops in revenue. Given the huge role that Latino small-business owners have played in keeping the small-business component of the economy alive and well, the fact that 1 in 3 Latino families have seen their businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19 is an inauspicious sign for the economic health of the small-business sector.
- **Difficulties making housing payments.** 41 percent of Latino parents/primary caregivers report having trouble paying for their rent or mortgage. The cost of housing has been more challenging for those who are renting their homes. 49 percent of renters are having trouble paying their rent compared to 35 percent of those who own their home.

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Underemployment. 52 percent of Latino parents/primary caregivers have had their work hours or their pay cut, but have kept their jobs.

The rise in unemployment among Latinos has also generated a decrease in health insurance coverage among families, as 37 percent have or someone in their household have lost their employer-provided health insurance benefits. Among those who lost health insurance, 54 percent reported that their children lost their health insurance coverage as well.

All of this has a big impact on the lives of the students we serve. Students return to school with new stress and anxiety about the pandemic and the effects of social isolation. Despite the best efforts, online education is not likely to provide the quality education that is delivered in the classroom. As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on and school doors remain shuttered for the year, the country is waking up to the reality that our students — especially young students and those in underserved communities — will suffer substantial learning loss.

There is also a technology gap or divide. Lack of technology has plagued communities of color for decades. Not having technology or access to broadband means our kids are going to fall further behind. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Only 60% of low income students are logging regularly into online instruction and engagement rates are also lagging in schools serving predominantly Latino students. This may cause children to become disengaged and the more frequently children miss school the worse their performance.

In addition, lower income students are less likely to have access to high quality remote learning or to a conducive learning environment (such as quiet place with minimal distractions, devices they do not need to share or parental academic supervision as parents have reduced time to support their children in distance education because they are more likely to need to work outside of the home). COVID-19 has also disrupted many of the supports that can help vulnerable students stay in school: academic engagement and achievement, strong relationships with caring adults and supportive home environments.

All of this has exacerbated existing achievement gaps. Schools must be prepared to meet students where they are and provide extra supports for those underserved. It is important to understand that the whole child development that occurs at school was interrupted during the pandemic. Some of the actions we can take include:

- Policy makers at the local, state and national levels should consider enacting policies that support Latino families
- Policymakers at the state level should consider directing support to Latino families who are not eligible for federal funding due to their immigration status
- Provide COVID-19 prevention materials in Spanish

- Provide laptops and free broadband access so students can access their classroom and online learning
- Do food drives and provide families with basic resources. Inequitable access to basic services such as income, housing and food is a major barrier to student success
- Develop strategies to address student learning loss. As it was mentioned before, student learning loss is a big issue for Latino students. Strategies include 1:1 instruction, small peer groups, leverage community partnerships to provide case management, counseling and student supports, provide credit recovery options and summer school opportunities
- Provide support for student social and mental health needs
- Provide teachers with resources that show them how they can make virtual engagement and instruction effective. Equity should be a focus of these trainings
- Currently few teachers are well-trained in using computers for instruction so we need to train teachers in remote-learning best practices.
- Work with parents to help create a good learning environment at home

These are just a few examples of things we can do to help our Latino students, and actually all students, during this pandemic.

OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

by Bettye Lusk—Director-at-Large, African American

A Commitment to Diversity and Equity is mandatory to ensure Educational Excellence for ... ALL CHILDREN ... especially during COVID-19 and beyond. This is a component of the Directors - at - Large "Importance of Equity Statement" which begins our AEC Virtual PowerPoint Presentation.

Sharan Burrow says ... We all need to work together because there are no jobs in a dead planet; there is no equity without rights to decent work and social protection, no social justice without a shift in governance and ambition, and ultimately no peace for the people of the world without the guarantee of equity and sustainability. We have more than 1000 districts and counties in the state of California. I am so excited to know and hear about the many equity plans that have been developed and implemented to address in the needs of our children within many of these districts and counties. I've had the opportunity to review many of them and this makes proud to be an educator in the state of California even though we are facing so many critical challenges and issues.

I am ecstatic to be a part of a Governance team in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District who has made the commitment to address the inequities within our district and champion excellence for all children. As governing boards, **WE CAN** mitigate the negative impacts of inequities ... by raising adult cultural awareness of ourselves and others. We must come to the table, look into each other's eyes ... admit our biases and begin courageous conversations that will enable us to create policies and develop plans to address the disparities being experienced by underserved children. I hope you enjoy reading the journey of the Lynwood Unified School District's Equity Journey.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you as Director-at-Large African-American and look forward to connecting with you in zoom meetings as we move forward on our journey together!

Stay Safe ...



LYNWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EQUITY JOURNEY

By Dr. Patricia Brent Sanco, Lynwood Director of Equity, Access, and Instructional Services

Submitted By: Bettye Lusk—Director-at-Large, African American

In LUSD we believe equity means providing unfettered, differentiated support and access to all students. We believe it is our moral obligation to systematically provide opportunities for every student to fearlessly achieve their own personal and professional aspirations.

Equity is not equality. It does not work on the premise that what is given to all - should work for all. Equity calls for an individualized approach to support based on the premise of fairness and inclusion. Equity is diagnostic. It reveals gaps and calls for the creation of concrete action steps to address them. Steps that will result in policy development, legislative remedies, and structural changes to all systems that create barriers, road blocks, and detours.

Our tenants of Equity, Access, and Justice guide the equity work in LUSD. LUSD started its equity journey a decade ago under the leadership of former superintendent, Dr. Paul Gothold. The work began by using data analysis to illuminate academic gaps and discipline disparities, develop strategic interventions, and provide professional development centered on cultural proficiency and competency. Parents were developed as leaders and engagement became a key focus area. Administrators were trained and encourage to respond to issues of inequity while developing a mantra of "Not on my watch". Programs were brought in to support African American students, English Learner students, Student experiencing Homelessness, and Foster Youth.

In 2016 the LUSD Board of Education established an Equity Department with the intent of centralizing all of its equity action steps and support services. I became the first LUSD Equity Director in October of 2016. Along with 4 Coordinators; Ms. Shirley Davis, Ms. Arazazu Garcia, Mr. Larry Reed, and Dr. Veronica Bloomfield. In July of 2018 our department expanded to include Instructional Services.

Equity work must include a plan that outlines goals and action steps. In 2017 LUSD School Board approved a three year, comprehensive equity plan. This plan was developed with input from all stakeholder groups. Our plan outlines five key goals:

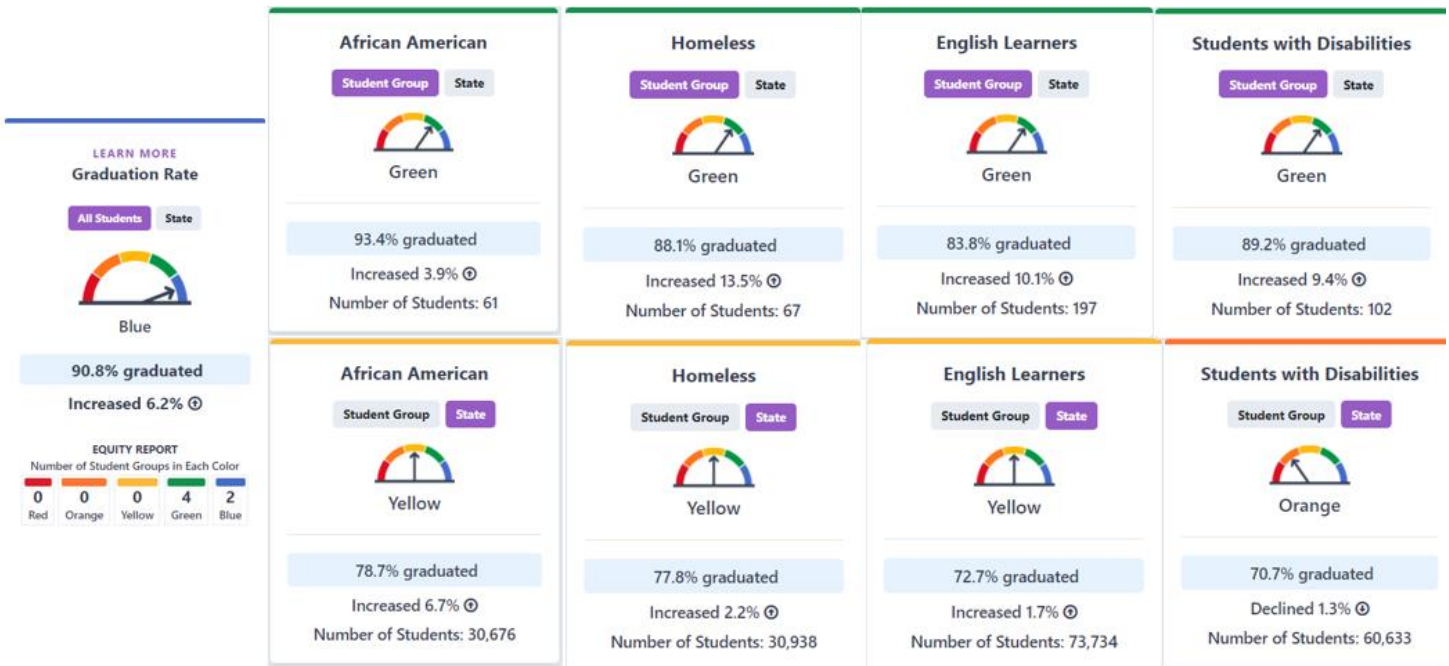
- Goal 1: Create an understanding of equity, tolerance, and cultural competence throughout the organization.
- Goal 2: Create structures that provide opportunities to learn about cultural groups.

- Goal 3: Provide targeted supports to traditionally underserved **STUDENTS** including but not limited to African American students, English Learner students, Asian Pacific Islander students, Foster Youth, Homeless students, and students who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Goal 4: Provide targeted supports to **PARENTS** of traditionally underserved students including but not limited to African American students, English Learner students, Asian Pacific Islander students, Foster Youth, Homeless students, and students who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Goal 5: Use data to define, establish, and implement culturally proficient practices throughout the organization

Our journey to meeting and sustaining these goals have led to the implementation of several programs, services, and policies such as; on campus mentors and tutors through the National College Resources Foundation, expansion of our enrichment programs using a 4.2 million 21st Century ASES grant, 3.1 million in kind partnership with the American Honda Foundation/ The Great 8 to establish a STEM/STEAM Pipeline for young men of color, expansion of our parent outreach using parent engagement specialists and community liaisons, a robust professional development plan focused on mindset shifts and strategy implementation, the elimination of pre-requisites for AP courses, Ethnic Studies courses which use the Social Justice Domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action, the establishment of an Equity Curriculum Inclusion Taskforce to examine our core curriculum for cultural relevance, board policy updates to reflect current pedagogy, hold harmless grading guidelines, district wide implementation of the PBIS program to address discipline disparities, use of over 50 community partners to support district initiatives, expansion of student and parent affinity groups, and consistent use of a data reflection protocol with teachers, counselors, and administration. Our school board, current Superintendent Dr. Gudiel Crowthwaite, and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Shawna Dinkins, have continued to make equity a priority to ensure that students and parents are given the supports they need.

The use of data has been instrumental in providing direction on how to allocate resources and target services. We use the following data points consistently: targeted student group's achievement data in ELA and Math, English Learner Reclassification rates and academic achievement data, graduation rates, D and F disaggregated data, AP entry data, AP course completion and passage rates, percentages of students represented in leadership groups on campuses, discipline data including suspension and expulsion data for targeted subgroups, rates of entry into Special Education programs for targeted subgroups, and multiple parent and student survey data.

James Baldwin stated that "not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced". In 2010 LUSD had a 58% graduation rate. Current data indicates that the current graduation rate is 90.8%. Our student population graduation rates are now higher than state averages:

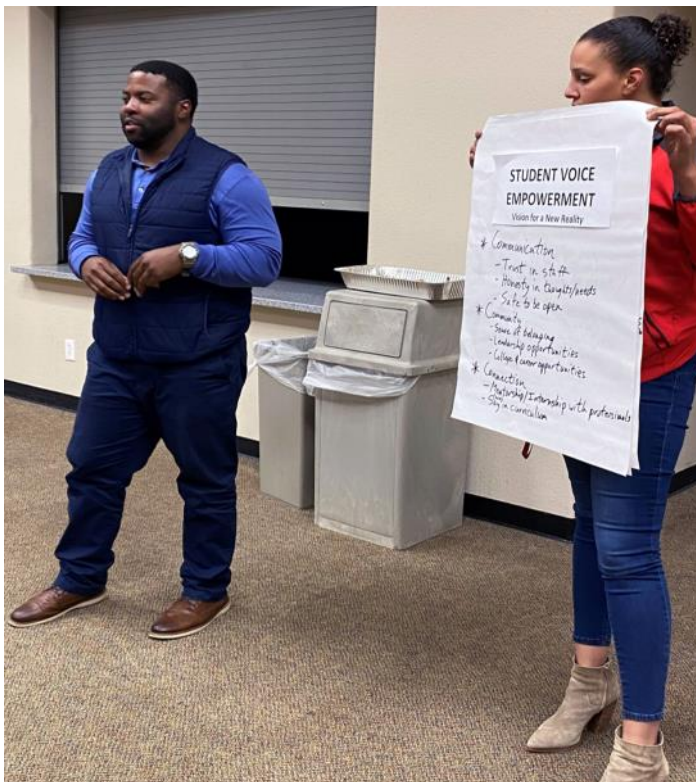


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During the 2019-2020 school year our Equity Access and Instructional Services Department hosted over 50 parent workshops and engagement opportunities. These opportunities moved beyond the traditional parent meetings to include family learning trips and excursions, cultural experiences, and cross cultural dialogues. Over 150 teachers attended the 1st annual Equity Warrior Summer Institute where they were immersed over a two days on topics that

included implicit bias and culturally and linguistically relevant instruction. Students in our most vulnerable populations were given targeted interventions such as home visits, college preparation sessions, on campus mentoring, grade checks, academic interventions, FAFSA application support, SAT workshops, and tons of off campus learning experiences.

LUSD has continued to provide all of the services and supports we can during school closure. That includes serving over 500,000 meals to families, distributing over 8,000 devices, distributing hot spots to our foster youth and students experiencing homelessness, virtual parent workshops, daily virtual enrichment programs, student check in's, and continuing student affinity groups virtually. As we look to the future and reimagining education, we are committed to ensuring we move forward with fidelity. We cannot be satisfied we with strides we have made to close the digital divide during COVID. We cannot be satisfied until our students can see themselves and their rich history and culture in our curriculum. We cannot be satisfied until all disproportionality in discipline, attendance, and assessments is eradicated. We cannot be satisfied until students of color feel relevant, seen, and valued. We have work to do, and the work of equity is this: Give students what they need when they need it.



COVID-19: THE IMPACTS ON THE NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND STUDENTS WITHIN THE K-12TH SYSTEM

by Dr. Crystal Martinez-Alire, Director at Large,
American Indian

“American Indian and Alaska Native people have suffered a disproportionate burden

of COVID-19 illness during the pandemic,”

(CDC Director Robert R. Redfield, M.D.)

The pandemic has impacted the United States population with an estimated total of 8 million COVID-19 cases, with 224,000 deaths. When looking more closely at California there is a rate of 873,000 COVID-19 cases that has impacted the overall population (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). The current pandemic has impacted many households, families, elders and children specifically those from diverse communities have increased rates. An example of those individuals impacted the most within diverse communities are those with underlying health issues and people from communities of color. For the purposes of this article we will look more closely at the Native American community. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2020 released a new study that specifically examines how COVID-19 is affecting American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) which is one of the racial and ethnic minority groups with the highest risk from the disease. It was found that in 23 selected states, the cumulative incidence of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among American Indian/Alaska Natives was 3.5 times that of non-Hispanic whites. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020).

During this critical time of the pandemic and with our schools closing not only within the K-12th educational system, but also within higher education; all students had to adjust to the new norm which includes on-line distance learning as the main mode of instruction. As known from the research, distance learning is an identified barrier for students who may not have access to internet or even a computer. It was found that one in every four Native American children do not have access to a computer or reliable internet (California Indian Education for All, 2020). For students to be successful academically, they must have access to the tools needed for on-line learning. As educators and leaders it's important that we ensure all students receive the necessary resources to support student learning virtually since this has become the main mode of teaching. Not only is it important to ensure all students are learning, but it's important for students to have social emotional supports. More outreach needs to be made to the students most at risk, and it's imperative that information is shared with families about counseling and mental health services due to the pandemic causing isolation. Providing access to key services such as; food, coun-

seling and health services allows students to focus on their academics.

When examining one of the school districts in California, specifically Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD), we can observe what practices are currently being done within the K-12th system. There are currently 62,866 students in Elk Grove Unified School District and it's the 5th largest district in the state of California, because of the large population of students; access and connectivity are a vital component to support synchronous and asynchronous learning for students. The EGUSD school district has been able to provide an estimated amount of 41,355 chrome books to students along with access to hot spots (1,000) in order to support student learning. Given the current times of COVID-19 it's critical for school district staff, teachers, administrators and employees to reach out to the most vulnerable families, to ensure they have the resources especially those students in the Native American community, and many other communities; such as newcomers, and undocumented students just to name a few. It's critical for the district to provide information and to connect families with community resources as EGUSD has made a conscious effort to reach out by methods of zoom, phone calls and other strategies. As we continue to move forward during this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to implement best practices such as these and remember to provide a more inclusive outreach in order to ensure equity for all students and to make sure students are learning.

In conclusion, school districts should continue to provide access and connectivity for all students and continue with implementing best practices while protecting the health of their communities. As we continue in leadership one must remember those vulnerable students and families to provide additional services for mental health, food and nutrition and health care. It's going to take working together as a team in order to maintain and operate services needed for so many students and families. That must be kept in mind when trying to provide the best educational experience for all within the K-12 educational system.

References:

(Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

(Elk Grove Unified School District, 2020)

(Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on American Indian K-12th students in California, 2020), California Indian Education.

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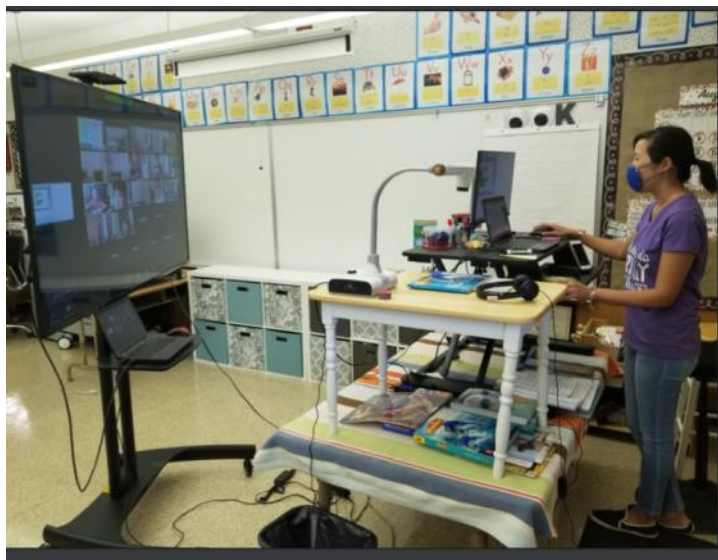
COVID-19: REVEALING QUESTIONS OF WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE & WHAT WE STAND FOR

by Gino Kwok—Director-at-Large, Asian-Pacific Islander

COVID-19 doesn't discriminate. Asians are a monolithic ethnic group. Both are seen as truisms--the former is scientifically true and conventionally accepted, while the latter is scientifically untrue and has been contorted into a minority myth whose primary purpose and impact are to divide communities of color. Public education is better than this. Public education must be better than this. Our children, no matter their ethnic background or life circumstances, deserve better than this.

At the beginning of 2020 as the world was in the process of figuring out what COVID-19 was and its dire consequences, California's public school districts were under increasing siege and essentially on their own. While information was being provided by the Governor in his daily briefings, there was no protocol. Some school districts continued along, while others voted to shut down temporarily. One of the first to close was Elk Grove Unified which was publicly criticized because it resulted in its defending CIF Boys' Basketball team forfeiting its semifinal game. My colleague, Crystal Martinez-Alire, CSBA American Indian Director-At-Large, serves on that Board. History has proven that Elk Grove's School Board was both courageous and right because they didn't deviate from its prime directive--the health and welfare of its students.

The School District that I have had the privilege of serving as President twice, Hacienda La Puente Unified, is similarly guided by its unwavering commitment to its kids. After conducting its regular evening Thursday School Board Meeting on March 12, 2020, the School Board re-convened less than 24 hours later in an emergency session to close its school sites based upon new information from the LA County Department of Public Health. Everything was changing day-by-day; hour-by-hour; minute-by-minute. HLPUSD's dedicated staff was monitoring everything.



Complaints abounded among a few. Why now? Because LA County had issued new information. Then why didn't HLPUSD close sooner like LAUSD, the largest School District in California? The first day of HLPUSD's closure was actually the same as LAUSD's, the succeeding Monday, March 16, plus HLPUSD's designated re-start date was weeks after LAUSD's. In the end, no one re-opened that school year.

As someone who was the President of the Summer Pro League that featured a 17-year old rookie Kobe Bryant in the summer of 1996 along with his Laker teammates, I had met the leading college coaches of the time. One coach that was universally admired and had led his college to unprecedented success after years of losing, was later unexpectedly and suddenly fired due to NCAA infractions. Everyone was shocked. How did this happen? The NCAA must be the villain as it is commonly portrayed. However, like most things in life, no one is always right, and no one is always wrong. The problem here is that someone may talk a good game, but the environment that this person creates may not be consistent with that which is verbalized. Put another way, culture matters.

The US Census defines "Asian" as someone having origins from "the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam." CALPADS, otherwise known as the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System, which is what our state's School Districts use, adds Pakistanis, Hmong, Indonesians, Taiwanese and Burmese to name just a few. This doesn't even include Pacific Islander, which the US Census defines as a "person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands."

Despite vastly disparate ethnic ancestry and geographic science, and no less an authority than the US Census, "Asians" remains in the minds of many as referring to one ethnic group. That's why perception matters. And if perception matters, then words matter. When the President of the United States calls Covid-19 the "Chinese Flu" and in other times the "Kung Flu" as a regular part of his campaign while his supporters add the "Wu Flu", is it any wonder that crime statistics and the "Stop AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) Hate" study show that there have been over 2,000 hate incidents against Asians? Or, that essentially all COVID-19 hate acts are inflicted against Asians and even against persons that are mistaken as Asians? Hate takes no prisoners. It brutally treats everyone the same. We all suffer when hate incidents and crimes abound; and our children suffer with us.

The biggest issue confronting public education has always been equity. But in the time of coronavirus it narrows foundationally into a more specific form: Digital Equity. HLPUSD is about 20% Asian and 70+% Latino. It is a District Wide *continued from page 7*

Title I School District. It's diversity, API and otherwise, is

celebrated in the form of Dual Immersion Programs in Chinese, Korean and Spanish. It doesn't strive to treat everybody equally, it is committed to treating everyone equitably. It also doesn't buy into the model minority fable, nor any implicitly biased stereotype embodied in the "all Asians are good at math" trope, an underhanded invention that has had far reaching detrimental consequences on the self-esteem of generations upon generations of API children.

When the COVID-19 first hit public School Districts in March, HLPUSD was as ready as it could be in light of a pandemic that no one foresaw or predicted. It was ready because its culture was right. Surveys in multiple languages were quickly sent to every parent in multiple languages. Procurement was revved up. In a matter of weeks, over 9,000 laptops and 5,000 mobile hotspots were distributed to HLPUSD's students. As a Labor-Management School District, teachers, staff, management and the District leaders collaborated. Was it perfect? Of course not. But perfection can never be allowed to become the intractable enemy of the good.

Distance learning in Spring 2020 was supposed to be temporary. Everyone thought that we would all be back in class before the 2020 school year ended. But, of course, it did not end up that way which was in turn succeeded by the expectation that the next school year would mark a return to in-classroom normalcy.

That did not happen either. However, in the Spring of 2020, HLPUSD's Labor-Management Team dynamically evolved a new intelligent design in light of the pandemic accompanied by the development of an emerging pedagogy for deeper learning. They accepted that the only certainty was uncertainty. But they were not resigned to uncertainty. As a School District that continues to offer free summer school, HLPUSD speedily got to

work. HLPUSD rolled out virtual classes in the form of Middle School Math Enrichment; High School make-up, CTE and original credit classes; and Dual Enrollment courses with Mt. San Antonio Community College.

Not only did students enroll, they did so in record numbers. Record enrollment is noteworthy alone, but record retention was something else altogether--the best possible icing on a cake that no one knew was being baked. A record number of students were taking summer school classes and a record number were completing them. And drop-outs were at all-time lows.

HLPUSD LMT realized that a new digital learning management system was integral for an expanded and expandable online learning ecosystem. CANVAS was selected and adopted. An aggressive timeline was implemented to ensure an August launch date: District trainers underwent training in June with all teachers in July. HLPUSD itself went back to school with a curriculum consisting of TECH TOSA (Teacher On Special Assignment) Daily Workshops; TECH TOSA YouTube Channel Training Videos; and Zoom conferences.

My parents came to America with two sons born in El Salvador for one reason above all else: to give to their children something better than they themselves had received. The back of the \$1 dollar bill has an incomplete pyramid with the eye of God looking over it and the Latin phrase "Annuit Coeptis"-- Providence Has Favored Our Undertaking. This seal is meant to be incomplete. And that's what HLPUSD and public education in California will always be. For the mission will always remain unfinished--a mission that can never be completed as long as there is at least one child left to educate.

